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Social Media

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Social Media

Writing Process

For this project I definitely had a lot of ideas floating around in my head but I struggled to get them down on paper. I think because I have a lot of opinions on this topic that criticize many of my peers, it made me want to say what was on my mind but I wanted to say it well. This was a great paper to write because social media is a topic that is so relatable to people my age. This made it so interesting to read articles and talk about social media usage. This paper really made me think about how people I know use social media and how I use it, and I realized that I don't just want to be another profile.

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Social Media

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Vine, Snapchat, and LinkedIn. In this present day and age, it seems as if everyone is logged on or plugged in to one or more of these sites. These sites have progressed from letting followers/friends know what you did last night to being able to connect you with different employers for a future job. However, it seems that this generation is still focused on posting pictures and tweeting about what they did last night instead of using these social medias for better and more important things. That is the case because to this generation, getting 100 likes or retweets on what they did last night is still the most important thing. The problem with this generation's social media usage is that they are unable to see past their computer screens; they're stuck in their virtual world rather than the real world. Both *Say Everything* by Emily Nussbaum and *Generation Why?* by Zadie Smith analyze this generation's obsession with social media and their unwavering need to put it all out there for the world to see.

Say Everything takes an inside look at this Internet generation and the constant need to update, post, and comment about their day-to-day lives on the Internet. Nussbaum says, "Kids today. They have no sense of shame. They have no sense of privacy. They are show-offs, fame whores, pornographic little loons who post their diaries, their phone numbers, their stupid poetry—for God's sake, their dirty photos!—online. They have virtual friends instead of real ones. They talk in illiterate instant messages. They are interested only in attention—and yet they have zero attention span, flitting like hummingbirds from one virtual stage to another." I agree

with this statement and feel people tend to have no filter on the Internet. People are more than willing to post candid, brutally honest blurbs about their personal lives online, and it doesn't matter whether one or one million people will see it. Growing up in this technology-filled era, people quickly learn what will get the most buzz, likes, comments, or favorites. For instance, on Instagram there are things like "Selfie Sunday." This is an excuse for people to post pictures of themselves with the guarantee they will get a lot of likes on the picture because to people today, likes equate to self-esteem. If you post a picture of yourself and get one hundred or more likes, you feel good about yourself and feel pretty. But, if you post a picture of yourself and only get 30 likes, you feel ugly or embarrassed and may want to delete the picture. It's a sick mind game, but it works. As the article states, "'Cause I think it's just so ... I don't know if *superficial* is the right word. But plastic. These profiles of people just parading themselves." These social media sites seem to be an outlet to let people express their best selves, not necessarily their true selves. They want to show the world they're fun, exciting, pretty, and interesting. What's worse is that so many people buy into it and really care. People check their different feeds so many times a day, waiting to see what's trending, who is talking about what, and what's new. In a generation that is used to faster, better, and always improving technology, people are willing to post more in order to keep up.

In *Generation Why?* Smith analyzes the parallels between the movie *The Social Network* and the real life Facebook. She discusses the older generation's view on this generation's social media-filled world. Overall, the older generation doesn't fully understand the inner-workings of Facebook and social media sites, but for what they do understand about it, they gather that it limits who a person is in order to fit them into a certain profile. Smith says, "We have different ideas about things. Specifically we have different ideas about what a person is, or should be." I

agree with this statement and that people have changed due to social media. For one thing, people allow themselves to become more public or private on Facebook. As the article says, “Gay kids became un-gay, partiers took down their party photos, political firebrands put out their fires.” I see some truth to this statement, but I do not one hundred percent agree with it. When Facebook first started out there weren’t a lot of people who had accounts, so it would make sense that if you were a private person you would feel that you could post more and not face repercussions. As Facebook grew in popularity, that same private person may not feel as comfortable with putting it all out there. Nowadays, I think people are more comfortable with publicity and letting people know what they are thinking, and if something is out there, then it will stay out there. As Smith says, “I am dreaming of a Web that caters to a kind of person who no longer exists. A private person, a person who is a mystery, to the world and - which is more important - to herself.” I agree it’s difficult to find a happy medium when using social media; I struggle between having different accounts but not wanting to use them and post on them all the time. While I have these accounts, I still find myself wondering “Is this worth it or even necessary?” Smith asks similar questions. She asks, “Is it really fulfilling our needs? Or are we reducing the needs we feel in order to convince ourselves that the software isn’t limited?” and “Yet what kind of living is this? Step back from your Facebook Wall for a moment: Doesn’t it, suddenly, look a little ridiculous? *Your* life in *this* format?” Overall, it’s okay to step back, disconnect, and log off of your Facebook page.

Both articles, *Say Everything* and *Generation Why?* present interesting insights on social media and its effects on this generation. *Say Everything* focuses more on this generation’s incessant need to put everything on the Internet. It’s relatable to the social media generation because it has personal stories of people from this generation using different social medias.

Generation Why? focuses on Facebook and how this generation has accepted Facebook for what it is and are willing to confine themselves to their profiles. The weakness of this article is that it is very one-sided, with the article talking negatively about Facebook and social media and not about any of the positives that come from these sites. After reading these articles and thinking a lot about my own social media usage, it has allowed a lot of my personal grievances about social media to come to the surface. I definitely agree that my generation is too absorbed in technology and social media, and we need to step back and unplug. Technology isn't going anywhere, it is always growing and changing to accommodate people in ways they didn't even know they needed. People should be less concerned with keeping up and more concerned with slowing down and remembering to enjoy what's really important in life: real human relationships.

In conclusion, the popularity, success, and public use of social media is growing every day. While social media continues to grow, it comes at a cost that most users are willing to overlook. Articles like *Say Everything* by Nussbaum and *Generation Why?* by Smith analyze the privacy and human interaction people are willing to give up every time they log on. People are missing out on the real world in order to stay better connected in the virtual world. It's a backwards system that is becoming more and more commonplace. People need to stop confining themselves to a profile on an eleven-inch screen and instead need to let themselves get out into the real world.